'Governmentality' in the origins of European female PE and sport: the Spanish case study (1883–1936)

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The purpose of the paper is twofold: (1) to contribute to the analysis of the origins of modern European female PE and sports from a power perspective, inspired by Foucault's work; and (2) to present a detailed analysis of female PE and sport in Spain (1883–1936) as a specific European case study. It is argued that these physical activities could be conceived in the Spanish case as part of a specific kind of 'governmentality' with a dual nature. On the one hand they represented disciplinary 'technologies of power' over the female body. Selected physical activities—dictated mainly from the hygienic-moral position of the *Regeneracionistas* ('Regenerationists')—were exerted as a kind of 'bio-power' for the control of the female population. On the other hand, such kind of activities (especially sports) represented certain 'technologies of the self' for middle and upper class women. Through participation in sports, women gained a more active and public role in the Spanish society of the era, obtaining some degree of autonomy in self-governance over their bodies and their lives.

Keywords: *Foucault; Power; Governmentality; Physical Education; Sports; Women; Spain*

Introduction

The origins of modern European female PE and sport, developed during the last part of the nineteenth century, were subject to gendered power relations. The following quote, coming from the founder of the modern Olympic Movement is telling:

> We sense that Olympic Games have to be reserved to men (...) We must continue to maintain the following definition: the solemn and periodic exaltation of male Athleticism, with the internationalism at its basis, loyalty as a means, art in the performance and the female applause as reward. (Pierre de Coubertin, quoted in Cohen G.L., 1993, p. 185)

Strange as it may now seem, the ideas expressed were nothing more than the expression of some 'natural' and tacitly assumed notions within the bourgeois morality of the epoch. Female physical education and sports were restricted to the activities that did not challenge the established ideal of femininity: activities making women healthier (for breeding, as advocated in the 'Spartan model') but at the same

time more attractive (showing grace and delicacy). As a motto of the Victorian era indicates: 'A horse sweats, a man perspires, but a lady only glows' (quoted in Jokl, 1981, p. xi). This was the general situation for women all around Europe[1] at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. In England, women's sport and physical activity appeared subject to what Mangan (1989) described as a biological determinism, thanks mainly to three intertwined discourses: (1) Biomedical, establishing the female body as fragile (Dowling, 1999); (2) Social Darwinism, establishing the role of women as reproductive and nurturing offspring; and (3) Victorian morality, imposing a role of good mother and spouse within the family. According to Dechavanne and Hartmann-Tews (2003, p. 70), at the beginning of the twentieth century in France, women were not allowed to take part in sports competitions. It was not just because they were not considered to have the physical capacities to do this kind of activity but also because the latter were considered an indecent form of public exhibitionism and therefore not appropriate for the *beau sexe*. Women were advised to just do some callisthenics to get healthier and give birth to a good progeny. As Boigey states, 'Women were made not to fight but to breed' (1922, p. 220). In the German case, both the gymnastics school of Guts Muths and the patriotic gymnastic movement of Jahn (the *turnen*) excluded almost all female participation. This circumstance was based upon moral, medical and aesthetic justifications. Female physical practices were localised in middle class sectors and consisted of restricted analytical movements and dances to improve health and boost beauty (Hartmann-Tews & Luetkens, 2003, p. 53). As we will try to show in this article, the situation of Spanish women in the sport/physical education ground was pretty close to their European counterparts, even though it maintained its own national idiosyncrasy.

The aim of this paper is twofold: (1) to introduce a power perspective, inspired by Foucault's work (with special attention to the concept of governmentality), into the analysis of the origins of modern European female PE and Sports; and (2) to present, in a detailed manner, a specific case study of this perspective in the European framework. In this fashion, we present at the same time both a sketch of the common ground spreading all around Europe and the specificity of the Spanish variant of this process. The interest of this paper resides in the fact that it could be used as a first step of a series of comparative studies all around Europe, based upon Foucauldian approach to power. We think this would be an adequate method to trace the genealogy of female PE and Sports in Europe, unravelling the gendered threads of historical inertia that current female physical culture inherits from the past.

Methodological comments

The proposed approach is illustrated by the content analysis of historical documents that exemplify different manifestations of both kinds of 'technologies'. We have examined the bibliographical references that existed during the era around the Spanish physical culture. The Journals *Gran Vida* (1903–1935) and *Heraldo*

Deportivo (1915–1936) were the most significant publications of the era. Apart from the fact that they covered pretty much the same span as our study, both can be considered encyclopaedic in coverage and crucial factors in the spread of the sports movement around Spain. The most relevant actors within the national physical culture wrote in the pages of these journals. Opinions and information (some of them on the female issue) came from different geographical points and formed a dynamic and vibrant dialogue. They regularly reproduced articles published in the Catalan, Basque, Andalusian, Madrilian and other regional press, giving a sense of the national Zeitgeist.

Apart from these two basic references, in order to make the collection of information more exhaustive, other periodicals have been consulted: *España Sportiva, El Mundo Deportivo* and general newspapers such as *El Sol* and *ABC*.

The quotes appearing in the discussion have been selected according to the criteria of suitability and relevance. The suitability criterion addresses whether or not the author has discussed the female issue within the PE/sport ground. The relevance criterion addresses whether or not the opinion expressed was coming from an important figure (e.g. Vicente Castro de Les, director of the sport magazine *Gran Vida*) and/or official documents (e.g. regulation of the *Escuela Central de Profesores y Profesoras de Gimnástica*).

Illustrations in the paper come from the *Archivo Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid, Fondo Fotográfico M.Santos Yubero.* They have been chosen following the same criteria as the quotes but with a slight nuance: important figures portrayed in the captions are always female, something that contrast sharply with the opinions in quotes, coming mainly from male sources. Female PE/sport were, of course, practiced by women but the issue was discussed, talked and analysed mainly by men; something very telling from the Foucaldian analysis of relations of power.

Focault in context: power analysis in PE and sport

Over the years, the work of Michael Foucault has gained greater acceptance in the sociology of sport and physical education community. Andrews (1993) and Rail and Harvey (1995) are two seminal introductory articles on this issue. Several studies from a Foucauldian standpoint have been conducted so far: discussion about sport sites as panopticons (Bale 1994; Rinehart, 1998); as technologies of discipline/ normalisation of class relation (Hargreaves, 1987) and race (Cole, 1996); as means for a desired governmentality (King, 2003). In physical education research, Kirk (1998, 2002, 2004) applied a Foucauldian approach to the schooling process carried out through PE; Wright (2000a, b) analyses what kind of bodies and subjectivities are constituted in PE lessons; Webb *et al.* (2004, 2008) centred their analysis on surveillance and privileged practices in institutionalised PE; McCuaig (2007) and McCuaig and Tinning (2010) explored the link between pastoral power and governmental technologies in health and PE programs; Öhman (2010) focused on how power and governance is generated in interaction during PE lessons. Gender

differentiation through PE and sport activities felt the influence of Foucault through the work of Messner (1998) and Light and Kirk (2000) on the construction of masculinities and the research of Bordo (1993), Markula (2003), Pringle and Markula (2005) and Markula and Pringle (2006) from a post-structuralist feminism approach.

Nonetheless, the ideas of Foucault have not yet been widely applied in the field of Spanish sport and physical education. The main exception is Barbero's (1993) analysis of the birth and early development of British sports. According to his understanding: 'The birth of sports answers, in a Foucaldian manner, to the bourgeois conscience (acquired through the nineteenth century) of the need to control populations in order to secure productivity' (1993, p. 11). Barbero's genealogical analyses of Spanish PE (1995) and the medical influence in PE (1994) are outstanding examples in this regard.

Until now, studies on the development of Spanish women's sports and PE have been conducted mainly on a historical-descriptive basis (Pajarón, 1987; Zagaláz Sánchez, 1998; Rivero Herraiz, 2011) blended with some sociological analysis, as in the work of Nuria Puig (1987), García Bonafé (1991) Bonafé (1992) or Benilde Vázquez (Pfister *et al.*, 1999). Nevertheless we consider these works lack a critical dimension informed by a solid theoretical stand. The present study tries to address this possible flaw by offering a Foucaldian analysis of the origins and early development of Spanish female PE and sports, contributing at the same time to a better understanding of the broader European field.

Power, physical education and sport

Although Foucault's vast oeuvre is sometimes difficult to articulate, his specific conceptualisation of power—not located in a central focus but working in a myriad of networks as relations of power—is omnipresent and provides an anchor to locate the analysis. In order to apply a Foucauldian notion of power to PE and sport it is very helpful to follow the discipline-biopower-governmentality axis. These three inter-related concepts advance in a chronological, coherent and encompassing order through Foucault's work.[2]

The concept of 'discipline' is best discussed in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1977). Discipline refers to a technology (either technique/practice or knowledge/discourse) that shapes and produces subjects. This is mainly achieved through the subtle normalisation of *docile bodies*. Mechanisms of normalisation (such as expert judgement, spatial organisation and examination) serve to distinguish the normal from the pathological, the desirable from the hateful. Through the discipline of bodies, control is not just exerted over separate individuals; the entire organisation of the population is achieved by these means. This organisational social phenomenon is expressed in the Foucaldian concept of 'bio-power', best exemplified in *History of Sexuality, Volume 1* (1988a). Here, the author exposed the working of modern power, linking the regulation of population to the development of capitalist production. As

the author states, 'this bio-power was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible with the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the phenomenon of population to economic processes' (1988a, pp. 140–141). John Hargreaves's (1987) remarkable analysis of British nineteenth century society applies these ideas to the sport field. He analysed the different treatment bourgeois and working class bodies were given in relation to the different functions demanded of them by the needs of the capitalist system. Nonetheless, in the case of women, PE and sport in the western world was especially aimed at the construction of a strong nation/race, in the same vein as nineteenth century nationalism, though perhaps with a more accentuated effect in Spain, due to the broader political situation in the country at this time.

This 'bio-power' that aims at controlling bodies and populations is clearly related to the notion of 'governmentality' (Foucault, 1991), the way everyday life is linked to the state, to the macro-mechanism of government. It refers to special ways of managing populations—taking special importance since eighteenth century—through the guidance of subjects' conduct; not repressing or punishing them but giving them an active role of self-production and self-governance. To this aim, the construction of a certain mentality or common sense is paramount. This is achieved in the reverberating and looping effect of different institutions, with education and medicine at the forefront.

So far we have paid attention to the constraining character of power. Nonetheless, we should not forget that the Foucauldian notion of power is not intended to imply the exertion of complete external control over individuals. As Foucault constantly remarked, to talk about power is to talk about 'relations of power' and this concept already always implies a certain kind of freedom or resistance. Taking this into account, 'governmentality' is not just a kind of total domination from a centre but it is based upon several power relations spread all over the population. In fact, governmentality lies at the contact line between 'technologies of power' (disciplinary and bio-power technologies) and 'technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988b); between the tension of technologies of governance of others and technologies of self-governance. These technologies of the self can bring some kind of resistance against certain practices of control and permit individuals 'to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and ways of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, wisdom, perfection or immortality' (Foucault, 1988b, p. 18). In this sense, sports could be conceived as a 'special kind of technologies of the self', allowing the chance for some kind of self-transformation and self-governance. We talk about a special kind, not in the strict sense that Foucault (1981, 1982) applied to the Greco-Roman conception of 'technologies of the self', based on a reflective knowledge of the truth about oneself and the production of self-care as a precondition for an *ethos*. Rather, sports could be close to such special kinds of technologies in the sense that they offer a certain way of managing and taking care of oneself, even leading to self-transformation in some cases. This is achieved not just through self-reflection but through a corporeal approach.[3]

Nonetheless, Foucault reminded us that these technologies of the self should not be understood as completely free, emerging from an independent subject. The autonomous anti-repressive practices of a prime self are just a chimera. Such technologies are always embedded and offered in and by a culture of human beings. The active construction of the self is always mediated by the society where he/she belongs.

In order to apply a Foucaldian approach to the analysis of the beginnings of Spanish female PE and sport we proceed in two consecutive steps: first we present the 'technologies of power' (discipline/bio-power) exerted through regenerationist discourses and PE/sport practices. Then we present the conceptualisation of sports as 'special technologies of the self', allowing Spanish women certain degrees of resistance in self-governance. The conclusion highlights the use of Foucauldian 'governmentality' in developing an understanding of female PE and sport.

'Technologies of power' in the origins of Spanish female PE and sports: discourses and practices

In this section we deal with the deployment of certain technologies of power through PE and sport over the Spanish female population, centred on the female body and issues of femininity during the last part of the nineteenth century and the beginnings of the twentieth century. Different discourses and practices were used to maintain certain control over women's role and function within a male dominated society.

Regenerationist discourses, schooling the docile body and corsets: technologies of power in the Spanish female body

As noted, Foucaldian ideas about 'technologies of power' include both discourses and practices, helping to give shape and maintain certain social models. The origins of female participation in physical education programme and sports could not be understood without some of these specific technologies, exerted mainly from the male position. According to Rivero Herraiz (2009, p. 14), *Regeneracionismo* ('Regenationism') was the most influential system of political thought in Spain during the first third of the twentieth century. At the forefront of the movement was Joaquín Costa, who expressed in his most famous works (*Reconstitución y europeización de España* in 1899 and *Oligarquía y Caciquismo* in 1911) the urgent need for national reform, taking Spain out of its nineteenth-century backward position, exacerbated by the disastrous defeat and loss of the last colonies in 1898. A programme to reform the administration, the economy, the system of production and political representation was proposed to modernise Spain into the ways of other Western countries of the era. A central concern was the 'impoverished race' represented by the Spanish population. The 'good breeding' of the human animal had to be restored—in a Darwinian/Spencerian echo—and good hygienic habits were crucial. Both PE and sport were favourite grounds to apply the regenerationist ideas. Three professional groups were the most active boosters of PE/sports in this

regenerationist vein: pedagogues, doctors and the military (though politicians and journalists also supported the movement). They published extensively on these matters from the end of the nineteenth century to the first third of the twentieth century in journals and newspapers such as *Gran Vida, Heraldo Deportivo, Los Deportes, España Sportiva,* etc. Within the debate around 'Regenerationism', the female issue gained great relevance; PE and sports became prominent sites for the disciplining and production of the female body to the service of the Spanish race/nation. As Kirk reminds us, 'Physical education and sport constitute specialised sets of practices within this site that make a crucial contribution to the social construction and normalisation of the body' (2002, p. 86). Taking both PE and sport together in the Spanish case, they shared certain parallelisms, reinforcing between each other the social ideal of the female physical culture of the era. Nevertheless, in order to study the specific way in which the progressive inclusion of the Spanish women into the national physical culture occurred, we prefer to distinguish between: (1) formal education (PE); and (2) sports. Both could not be considered the same in that they did not offer to women the same degree of resistance either (as we see later when considering the 'technologies of the self').

Schooling the docile female body in PE. The institutionalisation of male and female physical education in Spain is located around the end of the nineteenth century. We have to wait until the 1880s in order to find the first serious attempt to include PE (male and female) in the formal educational network. The Law 9th of March 1883 declared the teaching of gymnastics in Spain official and the creation of the *Escuela Central de Profesores y Profesoras de Gimnástica* ('Central School of Male and Female Teachers of Gymnastics') was planned, starting to run in 1887. It is important to discuss briefly the distinct treatment of male and female students in this institution. The first difference was about the prerequisites for entrance. Whereas, on the academic side, the entry requirement—superior primary school—was the same for both, the age interval and the physical requirements differed. Age of entrance varied depending on the sex: 18 to 25 for boys and 15 to 20 for girls (taking into account the maternity cycle). With regard to physical capacities, only boys were obliged to be strong enough to participate in gymnastics lessons themselves, something evaluated by the physicians of the school. The syllabus for girls (receiving segregated education from boys) was also different: no fencing in form, the gymnastics pedagogy was imparted by a female teacher, and the rest of the subjects were adapted to 'the most convenient contents for the female organism'. They were practiced every other day and not daily, as was the case for boys (Plana, 2004, p. 109, 112). Both issues clearly show that the physical fitness requirements for girls were much lower than for boys. This was due to the fact that physical activities were not to be exhausting or energetic but some kind of maintenance callisthenics, promoting the health of the future mother while avoiding a possible distortion of the delicacy of the *fragile sex.* This is why fencing drills were suppressed and callisthenic exercises limited.

The institution remained open just for four years. During this time, various contradictory measures were passed but overall they were not favourable to the

definitive regularisation of gymnastics. School physical education and sport remained circumscribed to the private sector, within centres directed by religious orders and mainly directed at boys. This situation helped to marginalise women even more, making it hard for them to get an appropriate physical-sport education.

If that was the legacy of female physical education at the end of nineteenth century, the situation stayed the same during the first years of the twentieth century. One of the most relevant Spanish women of the first third of twentieth century, Emilia Pardo Bazán stated that through physical education, women would achieve a growth in stature and vigour; would breathe better and would improve their blood composition (*Gran Vida*, 1914 [131], p. 17). Similar arguments were used by the *Regenacionistas*, preaching that the practice of physical education among the youth would be crucial for the eagerly craved national regeneration.

In 1914, Vicente Castro de Les, director of the sport magazine *Gran Vida*, wrote:

> Spanish women keep on being influenced by ancient prejudices and should be attracted definitively to the modern life, towards the conquest of strength and health through exercises that enrich the blood (...) When we achieve the state where women in Spain have reached the perfect physical education we will have taken the first steps to the true regeneration. The children of these mothers will have hearts and hands to guide the country and will give it new days of glory and will not feel faint-hearted, the sickness of the current generation. (*Gran Vida*, 1914 [132], pp. 141–142)

Women's presence in formal education was non-existent in the next official institution for the instruction of gymnastics teachers: the *Escuela Central de Educación Física de Toledo* ('Central School of Physical Education of Toledo'), founded by Colonel Villalba Riquelme in 1920. Nevertheless, during the 1920s, we witness a greater participation of women in the physical culture of the country. As we will see below, sports already showed some dynamism and boosted women's participation. This phenomenon was mirrored by the new degree of inclusion—though inheriting some of the old preconceptions about female nature—that women received within programme of physical education. The hygienist discourse was still clearly defining female physical practices, differentiating them from their male counterparts, especially in the issues referring to the distortion of women's natural condition as breeder/childminder. Special attention placed on the muscles around the pelvis underlined that the focus of female gymnastics was on those parts improving the capacities associated with motherhood (García Bonafé, 1992). Certain distance from such conceptions was not noticed at all until the 1930s, when women's social image became attached to more active and participative roles within society as a whole and within sports specifically.

Sports 'suitable for women' and clothing constraints in the sport female body. Formal education helped to install this gendered view of physical activities. Nonetheless, another informal 'educational' institution played a considerable role. As Messner reminds us:

> Organised sport is [sic] a 'gendered institution'—an institution constructed by gender relations. As such, its structure and values (rules, formal organisation, sex

> composition, etc.) reflect dominant conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Organised sports is also a 'gendering institution'—an institution that helps to construct the current gender order. (1998, p. 119)

The sports in which Spanish women were taking part at the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth century were, in most cases, aristocratic activities that caught the interest of upper class women: horse riding, tennis, skiing and similar sports. All of them were restricted to such niches, with limited prospect of expansion into other social classes. Madrid and Barcelona were almost the only female sport centres. Besides them, other summer recreational areas, especially Santander and San Sebastián, developed new sports for women including swimming, athletics, female callisthenics, etc. (Rivero Herraiz, 2002). However, from 1910 onwards female sports participation underwent a greater expansion, associated with the new social conditions of Spanish society that were getting closer to lifestyles in other European cities, and which were considered more socially advanced. Nevertheless, women could not participate in any sport they fancied. In fact, the debate during the 1910s centred on appropriate sports for women and those that they should not practice. As stated in *Gran Vida* in 1915; 'the female gymnastics (Fig. 1) should not ever be a gymnastics of strength but of grace' (*Gran Vida*, 1915 [142], p. 91). Thus, there was an accepted idea about suitable characteristics of the physical-sport practices for men (strength, vitality) and women (grace, health, beauty). There was an extended opinion on the activities suited for women: walking, mountaineering, tennis, golf, skating, swimming, rowing and some elitist sports, such as horse-riding, hunting, soil fencing or car racing. On the contrary, boxing, Greco-roman wrestling, jiu-jitsu and others closely associated with male values (football and other team sports, most of the disciplines of athletics, cycling, etc.) were not considered suitable at all for them.

Figure 1. Fifth Gymnastics Week organized by the Spanish Gymnastic Society. Madrid, 1935.

Within this context, the question of female sport clothing was especially problematic and particularly revealing. It was an important issue, affecting both morality and hygiene. The debate went on for a while. The sport magazines published several notes and articles about it—especially during the 1920s—trying to give some advice to the first sportswomen: comfortable and suitable clothes for sport practices but always in accordance with the moral norms of female dressing. Thus, it was not a matter of fashion. Rather, behind the issue of suitable clothing for female sport, there were some important questions about the development and promotion of the Spanish women:

> Female sport clothes have to be as simple as possible. Pleated skirt, Scottish style, is the most perfect one and must reach under knee level.Stockings must reach knee level, not impeding its free movement.There is no need to say that any obstacle must be banned: corset, garter and very tight belt.In these new conditions, women can play—without any harm—sports where she will find health and will make her natural gifts perfect. (*Gran Vida,* 1922 [232], p. 309)

The debate revealed the backward state of female sport in the nation. During those years, French and English female players were already wearing shorts. In 1920, female football became fashionable in France and a team of female players crossed the English Channel to face British teams in Preston, Stockport and Manchester.

The prevailing idea in the Spanish case was that female sport should be directed towards the improvement of hygienic and aesthetic aspects—normally identified with the natural female condition—and should be distanced from strength, endurance or violent attitudes: characteristics that were often attached to male sports. The principal aim was to make the values of motherhood prevailing. The care of the female body was aimed at increasing the breeding function, avoiding any harm in the sporting field to their main biological role (Porras, 1925).

Sports as 'special technologies of the self' for the Spanish women

We have shown so far how different disciplinary technologies were applied to the female body and women (compared to men and male bodies) through PE and sport. Nevertheless, we should not forget that Foucault's concept of power has the dual nature of constraining/allowing conducts and ways of being; that 'governmentality' of subjects is situated precisely in the contact line of technologies of power and technologies of the self. Thus, we cannot forget that physical activity (especially sports) also allowed some women, mainly from the upper and middle classes, to build themselves on more active roles, being more visible and present on the public sphere. In the case of Spanish women, sports could be conceived as a special kind of 'technologies of the self', allowing them some kind of self-transformation and self-governance in a male-oriented society. Sports offered them certain (but not absolute) degrees of resistance and certain (but not absolute) degrees of freedom from male domination.[4]

As stated above, from 1910 onwards female sports participation underwent a greater expansion, associated with the new social conditions of Spanish society. Madrid,

Barcelona, Valencia, Seville and Bilbao were the main recipients of the rural exodus to the cities with people searching for the new opportunities that the industrial and service sectors were offering. During this period of modernisation, some women of great intellectual value started to be seen prominently in Spanish society: Emilia Pardo Bazán, Carmen de Burgos, Clara Campoamor, Victoria Kent, etc.

Inside such a social favourable milieu, female sports started to spread: firstly within selected and restricted groups, limited to certain clubs—as the *Fémina Natación Club* ('Female Swimming Club'), founded in Barcelona 1912 (Segura, 2000)—in the big urban settlements. During the 1920s, and especially during the 1930s, greater information among women and greater social flexibility, improvements in female education, and other modernising features of society favoured the increase of female participation in sport. During the 1920s, nature-related sports such as hiking, mountaineering, winter sports and any physical activities in the countryside became increasingly popular with women and were an expression and a sign of social changes and advances of the female condition. Of course, these were not activities for everybody; only certain groups could afford them. They were looking for new lifestyles and ways of leisure, finding in the mountain a new means to express their interests and satisfy their needs. Tourism and photography in the country appeared often in sport magazines. Spanish women considered that both expressed modern, cultural and sport values. Female sport started spreading from a reduced elitist niche to the middle classes and even to the lower classes thanks to workers association, school and trade unions. The association network in Barcelona also promoted women's sport. The creation in 1928 of the *Club Femení d'Esport* ('Female Sports Club'), whose motto was 'Femininity, Sport, Culture', tried to boost female participation, both bourgeois and working class, in an active role within public life. It gave a great push for women's sports. It was, for example, crucial for the spread of basketball among young Catalan girls, counting among its ranks 2000 associates and 10 teams in 1931. During the 1920s, Spanish women also started to play team games—considered very violent at this time—such as hockey or *jockey* (both forms being used in the Spanish sport magazines during that time). By 1923 women were playing hockey in Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao and San Sebastián with clubs formed in each of these cities (Fig. 2). There were some clear signs of activity in Seville, Vigo, Jerez and other cities as well.

Figure 2. Female *Hockey Club Atlético de Madrid, Madrid,* 1936.

It was at this time that the first sport heroine started to gain visibility. Female tennis player Lilí Álvarez (Fig. 3) made it to the final of Wimbledon three times in a row between 1925 and 1927 and in 1929 she won Roland Garros in the doubles category. The press reported her exploits but Lilí Alvárez, famous and recognised during the era, did not fully represent the situation of Spanish women of that time. Her social and biographical circumstances made her more similar to a female European cosmopolitan citizen than to her fellow urban countrywomen. Despite the fact that Spanish women were receiving more information about sport, few of them were playing it yet.

Figure 3. Lilí Álvarez (1952), most famous female tennis player of the era.

The start of the third decade of the century witnessed a new sports conscience for women. During the 1930s, sports became for many women, though mainly restricted to urban areas, a new mode of emancipation and a symbol of independence and cultural overcoming (Fernández Díaz, 1987, pp. 117–167). The 1930s brought an openness to Spanish society, coinciding with the Second Spanish Republic (1931–1936),[5] whose educative, cultural and social policy made possible the incorporation of women into a wider range of social activities. Women gained the vote and divorce rights. They experienced labour emancipation and, of course, greater opportunities to participate in sports.

The concept of femininity known and portrayed in the media until then started to change. The paternalistic tone was not used as much as before and the image of the beautiful and graceful woman started to give way to images of more active female roles (Riaño González, 2004, p. 124). The female sports results, the breaking of records and the victories achieved by different teams contributed, without any doubt, to this new perception. Whereas during the decade of the 1920s, associations and clubs were the main institutional cores of female sport (taking into account that tennis had been played since the beginning of the century), during the 1930s

federation level and national competitions were developed (Fig. 4). Two female clubs with a high degree of affiliation contributed in a determining way. On one side the already mentioned *Club Femení i d'Esport* and on the other side the *Club de Deporte Femenino* ('Female Sports Club'), established in Madrid in 1935. From both sides there was a great interest in boosting female participation in the social, labour and sport fields, both for the middle and the working classes. They tried to replace the regenerationist English or Swedish models with a new Soviet one: working woman, vital and full of energy. An example of female sports' integration in high level competition was the succession of national championships that attained a certain social significance. For instance, in the third hockey championship—the last before the Spanish Civil War started—4000 to 5000 people attended the matches (*As*, 1936, 6th of April, p. 18).

Figure 4. Female cycling race. *Club Ciclista Chamartín*. Madrid, 1935.

Moreover, we cannot forget the fact that international participation of Spanish sportswomen started within this decade. Despite the fact that Lilí Alvárez had astonished the world of tennis during the 1920s, the 1930s saw the takeoff of other kinds of sports' heroines: the National Female Hockey Team made its debut in Berlin during 1935; in Swimming, Carmen and Enriqueta Soriano y Lepage participated in the European Championships in 1934. Margot Moles and Ernestina Baenza did the same in the Winter Olympic Games in Germany during 1936.

Concluding remarks: female PE and sports within the balance of 'governmentality'

This article has developed an analysis of gendered power relations in the origins of female PE and sport in a European case study. In the case of Spanish women, PE and sport have been presented in the first place as examples of 'disciplinary technologies of power' of the female body in order to normalise and regulate their conduct: (1) Medical-moralist discourses (especially represented in the so-called Regeneracionists) on the link of race, physical activity and female's breeding function/aesthetic nature; (2) regulations on clothing; and (3) debates around the suitable kind of sports for women are all examples of such technologies.

Nonetheless, when talking about 'power' from a Foucaldian view, it is important not to treat it as an absolute and closed concept, but as a relational, dynamic and open concept. For Foucault, power always implies certain kinds of freedom or resistance. Indeed, the manoeuvring within power relations should alert us to the other part of the equation of 'governmentality': the 'technologies of the self'. In the case of Spanish women, sports could be conceived as a special kind of 'technologies of the self', allowing them some kind of self-transformation and some degree of self-governance in a male oriented society.

In sum, this dual nature of power explains why sports and PE represented for women a disputed or contested terrain of 'governmentality' where they experienced a greater participation in public life (especially in sports) but in circumstances almost positioned by and according to the male dominant position. The same power that constrained female bodies and activities empowered them to build a different, more active role.

This insight into the conceptualisation of power from a Foucaldian approach should not be restricted to the Spanish case. It is our intention to boost scholar's interest into a comparative framework where different studies from different countries could give us a better understanding of the origins of European female PE and sport.

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Notes

1. Situation of female PE/sports in the United States resembled the same attitudes and values as in Europe. As Vertinsky (1987) reminds us:
   Physicians and moralists united after the 1870s in the joint desire to rescue the American race (and generate good business) by restoring emphasis on the female body to counteract female independence and the weakness they believed was caused by too much brainwork. Systematic exercise seemed offer an opportunity to regain control over the lazy body and to reintroduce substitute physical labor into the lives of wordless middle class women. Sports and physical activity would provide the strength and muscle to improve women's maternal function, but would not, they were sure, destroy the beauty of feminine curves, or the harmony of the home (...) Morality and a moderate muscularity thus joined in a salvage plan supported by orthodox physicians to renovate the female body and fortify a lady's will to be a good mother (1987, p. 259).
2. We follow Nikolas Rose (1999) idea about the fact that 'governmentality' implies already the notions of body disciplines and control of population and constitutes a latter development of the Foucauldian power/knowledge investigations. Also, we agree with Cole *et al.* (2004) in their statement that 'in order to understand Foucault's exposition of modern power, *Discipline and Punish* and *History of Sexuality* must be read together' (2004, p. 216).

3. In this sense, oriental practices such as yoga, tai-chi or martial arts could be conceived as well in this special group of technologies of the self based on a corporeal approach towards self-transformation.
4. As J. Hargreaves (1993) remind us 'during the formative years of female sport—that is, from the middle of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century—the legitimate use of the female body was redefined to symbolise a more active (yet when compared with men nevertheless still subordinate) role' (1993, p. 71).
5. The Second Spanish Republic was a brief but relevant political period (1931–1936) compressed between Primo de Rivera's dictatorship and the Spanish Civil War. Consisting in a democratising and modernising project of the country, it clashed openly against the opposition of the conservative forces, ending up in the disgraceful conflict of the Spanish Civil War.

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